

I attended the panel discussions this morning in Seattle and have several comments to make in response, regarding news media:

1) Because of large corporate ownership of news media outlets (of all media types) there is a general distrust and even disinterest in news presentation by the general public. Because of conglomeration, gone is the integrity of the news production and gone is the personal attachment to that news production. Both integrity and attachment are essential for encouraging engagement by the general population in the issues that demand their engagement. If faceless corporations own our news outlets, individuals are disenfranchised and not motivated to pursue all the points of an issue. This is especially important in our times when many are confused, unaware and uncertain about the issues surrounding them. And, they are uncertain about where to find answers to the issues that matter to them. It is these times when local and national debate, spurred by coverage by independent news media outlets is increasingly essential.

2) As members of a democratic republic, absorbing information over the publicly owned airwaves, we have the right to hear, see and read all points of view. This is essential to completing the right to expression. To speak your mind is only half the puzzle, you must also be heard. As participants in the republic, we have to right to be educated by objective and independent sources of news that are not stakeholders or otherwise motivated by the events they cover. As an example of this, even Commissioner Capps asked this morning, why there wasn't national coverage on this important topic? You have to ask, if you owned a news outlet that stood to loose from increased regulation, wouldn't you be motivated to keep that issue under wraps? It's not evil, it's just how priorities have been established under the current structure. That structure needs to change so that priorities of news outlets promote the right of expression so that we can hear, see and read all points of view.

3) It is clear that different market-types have different needs. A small town has different news media needs than a large city. This is especially important when maintaining independence in smaller markets, where advertising revenue may not economically support even one local radio station. There should be policy to support these situations, even in the light of homeland security. If a small rural community does not have a local voice that is tied into the happenings of the world, they may be left out of important news and events.

What I see as a perfect situation:

I want independent news, from local entities that have local integrity and local attachment. I want the FCC to support policy that will increase the number of outlets available in any market and make all the outlets independent. In smaller markets, this may mean one radio station that has the responsibility of covering all points of view within its service area. News outlets should not be competing for advertising or market share, rather they should be competing in their coverage of issues and events. The FCC needs to change policy to create a different set of motivations and priorities of new media outlets. Most importantly, trust needs to be reinstalled in the US news media.